



## Employment

### **Everyone can work!**

People work because it gives meaning and value to their lives. Some of the rewards of work are:

- Earning money
- Receiving benefits such as medical coverage
- Making a difference
- Being creative
- Self-worth
- Feeling good about what you do
- Having friends
- Being productive
- Being independent

### **What skills can be developed to get and keep a job?**

Young adults who have had some work experience while in high school have a better chance at getting and keeping a job than those who have no previous experience. While in high school students can:

- Develop positive work skills
- Be on time
- Be responsible
- Take directions
- Respond appropriately to constructive criticism
- Get along with peers, co-workers and supervisors
- Follow directions
- Solve problems
- Perform specific work tasks
- Be persistent and willing to work

### **What are some work choices?**

After high school, some people begin work right away. Others choose to work and go to school. Some people try many different jobs to find out what they like to do and don't like to do. Few people work at the same job their whole life.

### **What job options exist?**

- Full/part-time jobs
- Supported employment
- Volunteer jobs
- Apprenticeships
- Self-employment
- Job sharing
- Customized

All people with disabilities can work. Some may need accommodations or supports to do the job. A federal law, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects job applicants from discrimination because of their disabilities. Qualified workers can receive reasonable support and accommodations in the workplace.

### **What are job accommodations?**

Examples of supports and accommodations on the job may include, but are not limited to:

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- Wheelchair accessibility
- Work schedule modifications
- Equipment modifications
- Job coaching
- Assistive technology
- Employee mentor

### **Here are some things to consider when choosing a job.**

- Is this job a good match for my interests and abilities?
- What are the required job duties?
- Is this the work environment for me?
- Is post-secondary training needed?
- Do I need any accommodations to perform the job?
- Do I need to tell the employer about my disability?
- How does this job fit with my previous work experience?
- What are the salary and benefits?
- Will this job improve or stop any of my disability or medical benefits?
- Are jobs within my areas of interest available in my community?
- What transportation do I need?
- Does this job have career potential?

### **What can families and teachers do?**

Families and teachers can have a valuable impact in helping youth prepare for employment. Families and teachers can:

- Set examples through positive work habits
- Help students understand how people communicate with and without words
- Respect all types of work
- Support creativity
- Encourage students to fully participate in meetings
- Teach coping skills
- Help students explain their disabilities and needed accommodations through self-determination
- Help students explore their interests
- Encourage long range goal setting
- Encourage the use of the Virginia Wizard
- Arrange or coordinate work experiences
- Encourage students to work part-time or volunteer in the summer
- Help students identify the courses that will prepare them for employment
- Teach students job seeking and job keeping skills
- Encourage independent decision making

### **Helpful community resources:**

- Previous employers
- Friends and family
- People who know the student's abilities and interests
- [Guidance counselors and career advisors](#)
- Teachers
- [Job Accommodations Network \(JAN\)](#)
- [211](#)
- [SSA/Medicaid works](#)
- [Department of Rehabilitative Services](#)
- [Social Security Administration](#)
- [Community Services Boards](#)
- [Community Colleges](#)
- [Virginia Employment Commission](#)
- [Local One-Stop offices](#)
- Local job fairs
- [Workforce Development centers](#)
- [vaACCESES](#)

For more information, contact your local Special Education Director, Teacher, local Department of Rehabilitative Services Office, or the Virginia Department of Education.

**Take the steps to person-centered thinking**  
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